

MEMOIR

OF

JOHN WOOLMAN,

CHIEFLY EXTRACTED FROM A

JOURNAL OF HIS LIFE AND TRAVELS.



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No. 1.

MEMOIR, &c.

JOHN WOOLMAN, the subject of this memoir, was a member of the society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, in North America. He was a bright example of purity and lowliness of heart, a preacher of the righteousness which is of faith, and one of those who laboured most early and earnestly, to open the eyes of mankind to the complicated injustice and cruelty of negro slavery, as well as of the trade which supplies its victims. To those who love mercy, and who have rejoiced in the removal, thus far, of that deep reproach to Christianity, it may be interesting to trace the progressive formation of the character of this advocate for mercy, and having contemplated some of his opinions and acts in life, to view him in its humble and peaceful close.

His account of himself opens thus: "I have often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God; and now, in the thirty-sixth year of my age, I begin this work.

"I was born in Northampton, in Burlington county, West Jersey, in the year 1720; and before I was seven years old I began to be acquainted with the operations of divine love. Through the care of my parents, I was taught to read nearly as soon as I was capable of it; and, as I went from school one seventh-day, I remember, while my companions went to play by the way, I went forward out of sight, and, sitting down, I read the 22nd chapter of the Revelations: "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, &c." and, in reading it, my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation, which, I then believed, God had prepared for his servants. The place where I sat, and the sweetness that attended my mind, remain fresh in my memory.

This, and the like gracious visitations, had that effect upon me, that when boys used ill language it troubled me; and, through the continued mercies of God, I was preserved from it.

The pious instructions of my parents were often fresh in my mind when I happened to be among wicked children, and were of use to me. My parents, having a large family of children, used frequently on first-days after meeting, to put us to read in the holy Scriptures, or some religious books, one after another, the rest sitting by without much conversation; which, I have since often thought, was a good practice. From what I had read and heard, I believed there had been, in past ages, people who walked in uprightness before God,

in a degree exceeding any that I knew, or heard of, now living: and the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness, amongst people in this age than in past ages, often troubled me while I was a child.

A thing remarkable in my childhood was, that once, going to a neighbour's house, I saw, on the way, a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near, she went off, but, having young ones, flew about, and, with many cries, expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, till, one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, as having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought these young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and, after some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds, and killed them; supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably: and believed, in this case, that scripture-proverb was fulfilled, 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I then went on my errand, but, for some hours could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled. Thus He, whose tender mercies are over all his works, hath placed a principle in the human mind, which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature; and this being singly attended to, people become tender-hearted and sympathising: but being frequently and totally rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition.

About the twelfth year of my age, my father being abroad, my mother reproved me for some misconduct, to which I made an undutiful reply; and, the next first-day, as I was with my father returning from meeting, he told me he understood I had behaved amiss to my mother, and advised me to be more careful in future. I knew myself blameable, and in shame and confusion remained silent. Being thus awakened to a sense of my wickedness, I felt remorse in my mind, and getting home, I retired and prayed to the Lord to forgive me; and do not remember that I ever, after that, spoke unhandsomely to either of my parents, however foolish in some other things.

Having attained the age of sixteen years, I began to love wanton company; and though I was preserved from profane language, or scandalous conduct, still I perceived a plant in me which produced much wild grapes; yet my merciful Father forsook me not utterly, but, at times, through his grace, I was brought seriously to consider my ways; and the sight of my back-slidings affected me with sorrow; but, for want

of rightly attending to the reproofs of instruction, vanity was added to vanity, and repentance to repentance. Upon the whole, my mind was more and more alienated from the truth, and I hastened toward destruction. While I meditate on the gulf towards which I travelled, and reflect on my youthful disobedience, for these things I weep, mine eye runneth down with water.

Advancing in age, the number of my acquaintances increased, and thereby my way grew more difficult; though I had found comfort in reading the holy Scriptures, and thinking on heavenly things, I was now estranged therefrom: I knew I was going from the flock of Christ, and had no resolution to return; hence serious reflections were uneasy to me, and youthful vanities and diversions my greatest pleasure. Running in this road I found many like myself; and we associated in that which is the reverse of true friendship.

But in this swift race it pleased God to visit me with sickness, so that I doubted of recovering; and then did darkness, horror, and amazement, with full force, seize me, even when my pain and distress of body was very great. I thought it would have been better for me never to have had a being, than to see the day which I now saw. I was filled with confusion; and in great affliction both of mind and body, I lay and bewailed myself. I had not confidence to lift up my cries to God, whom I had thus offended; but, in a deep sense of my great folly, I was humbled before him; and, at length, that Word which is as a fire and a hammer, broke and dissolved my rebellious heart, and then my cries were put up in contrition; and in the multitude of his mercies I found inward relief, and felt a close engagement, that if he was pleased to restore my health, I might walk humbly before him.

After my recovery, this exercise remained with me a considerable time; but, by degrees, giving way to youthful vanities, they gained strength, and, getting with wanton young people, I lost ground. The Lord had been very gracious, and spoke peace to me in the time of my distress; and I now most ungratefully turned again to folly; on which account, at times, I felt sharp reproof. I was not so hardy as to commit things scandalous; but to exceed in vanity, and promote mirth, was my chief study. Still I retained a love for pious people, and their company brought an awe upon me. My dear parents, several times, admonished me in the fear of the Lord, and their admonition entered into my heart, and had a good effect for a season; but, not getting deep enough to pray rightly, the tempter, when he came, found entrance. I remember once, having spent a part of the day in wantonness, as I went to bed at night, there lay in a window, near my bed, a bible,

which I opened, and first cast my eye on this text, ‘We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us.’ This I knew to be my case; and, meeting with so unexpected a reproof, I was somewhat affected with it, and went to bed under remorse of conscience: whir I soon cast off again.

Thus time past on: My heart was replenished with mirth and wantonness, and pleasing scenes of vanity were presented to my imagination, till I attained the age of eighteen years; near which time I felt the judgments of God, in my soul, like a consuming fire; and, looking over my past life, the prospect was moving.—I was often sad, and longed to be delivered from those vanities; then again, my heart was strongly inclined to them, and there was in me a sore conflict: At times I turned to folly, and then again, sorrow and confusion took hold of me. In a while, I resolved totally to leave off some of my vanities; but there was a secret reserve in my heart, of the more refined part of them, and I was not low enough to find true peace. Thus, for some months, I had great troubles; there remaining in me an unsubjected will, which rendered my labours fruitless, till at length, through the merciful continuance of heavenly visitations, I was made to bow down in spirit before the Lord. I remember one evening I had spent some time in reading a pious author; and walking out alone, I humbly prayed to the Lord for his help, that I might be delivered from all those vanities which so insnared me. Thus, being brought low, he helped me; and, as I learned to bear the cross, I felt refreshment to come from his presence; but, not keeping in that strength which gave victory, I lost ground again; the sense of which greatly affected me; and I sought deserts and lonely places, and there, with tears, did confess my sins to God, and humbly craved help of him. And I may say with reverence, he was near to me in my troubles, and in those times of humiliation opened my ear to discipline. I was now led to look seriously at the means by which I was drawn from the pure truth, and learned this, that if I would live in the life which the faithful servants of God lived in, I must not go into company as heretofore in my own will; but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a divine principle. In times of sorrow and abasement these instructions were sealed upon me, and I felt the power of Christ prevail over selfish desires, so that I was preserved in a good degree of steadiness; and being young, and believing at that time that a single life was best for me, I was strengthened to keep from such company as had often been a snare to me.

I kept steadily to meetings; spent first-day afternoons chiefly in reading the Scriptures and other good books; and was

early convinced in mind, that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures.—That as the mind was moved, by an inward principle, to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world.—That, as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal sensible creatures, to say we love God, and, at the same time exercise cruelty towards the least creature, is a contradiction in itself.

I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions; but believed, that sincere upright-hearted people, in every society, who truly love God, were accepted of him.

All this time I lived with my parents, and wrought on the plantation; and, having had schooling pretty well for a planter, I used to improve it in winter evenings, and other leisure times; and, being now in the twenty-first year of my age, a man, in much business at shopkeeping and baking, asked me, if I would hire with him to tend shop and keep books. I acquainted my father with the proposal; and, after some deliberation, it was agreed for me to go.

At home I had lived retired; and now, having a prospect of being much in the way of company, I felt frequent and fervent cries in my heart to God, the Father of mercies, that he would preserve me from all corruption; that in this more public employment, I might serve him, my gracious Redeemer, in that humility and self-denial, with which I had been, in a small degree, exercised in a more private life. The man, who employed me, furnished a shop in Mount-Holly, about five miles from my father's house, and six from his own; and there I lived alone, and tended his shop. Shortly after my settlement here, I was visited by several young people, my former acquaintance, who knew not but vanities would be as agreeable to me now as ever; and, at these times, I cried to the Lord in secret, for wisdom and strength; for I felt myself encompassed with difficulties, and had fresh occasion to bewail the follies of time past, in contracting a familiarity with libertine people; and, as I had now left my father's house outwardly, I found my heavenly Father to be merciful to me beyond what I can express.

After a while, my former acquaintance gave over expecting me as one of their company; and I began to be known to some whose conversation was helpful to me: And now, as I had experienced the love of God through Jesus Christ, to redeem me from many pollutions, and to be a succour to me through a sea of conflicts, with which no person was fully

acquainted ; and as my heart was often enlarged in this heavenly principle, I felt a tender compassion for the youth, who remained entangled in snares, like those which had entangled me from one time to another. This love and tenderness increased; and my mind was more strongly engaged for the good of my fellow-creatures. I went to meetings in an awful frame of mind, and endeavoured to be inwardly acquainted with the language of the true Shepherd; and, one day, being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up, and said some words in a meeting; but not keeping close to the divine opening, I said more than was required of me; and being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could not take satisfaction in any thing : I remembered God, and was troubled, and, in the depth of my distress, he had pity upon me, and sent the Comforter. I then felt forgiveness for my offence, and my mind became calm and quiet, being truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies; and, after this, feeling the spring of divine love opened, and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting, in which I found peace ; this, I believe, was about six weeks from the first time. And, as I was thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure Spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to his flock.

From an inward purifying, and steadfast abiding under it, springs a lively operative desire for the good of others. All the faithful are not called to the public ministry ; but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. The outward modes of worship are various; but, wherever any are true ministers of Jesus Christ, it is from the operation of his Spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them, and thus giving them a just sense of the conditions of others.

This truth was early fixed in my mind ; and I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed, lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words from worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of the true gospel ministry.

In the management of my outward affairs, I may say, with thankfulness, I found truth to be my support, and I was respected in my master's family, who came to live in Mount-Holly within two years after my going there.

About the twenty-third year of my age, I had many fresh and heavenly openings, in respect to the care and providence

of the Almighty, over his creatures in general, and over man as the most noble amongst those which are visible. And being clearly convinced in my judgment, that to place my whole trust in God was best for me, I felt renewed engagements, that in all things I might act on an inward principle of virtue, and pursue worldly business no further, than as truth opened my way therein.

My employer having a negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting, who bought her. The thing was sudden; and, though the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures felt uneasy, yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our society, who bought her; so, through weakness, I gave way, and wrote it; but, at the executing it, I was so afflicted in my mind, that I said, before my master and the friend, that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion. This in some degree abated my uneasiness; yet, as often as I reflected seriously upon it, I thought I should have been clearer, if I had desired to have been excused from it, as a thing against my conscience; for such it was. And, some time after this, a young man, of our society, spoke to me to write a conveyance of a slave to him, he having lately taken a negro into his house; I told him I was not easy to write it; for, though many of our meeting and in other places, kept slaves, I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from the writing. I spoke to him in good-will; and he told me that keeping slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind; but that the slave being a gift to his wife, he had accepted of her."

By this time John Woolman had begun to travel occasionally in the exercise of his gift as a minister, and in his account of one of these journeys, performed in company with a friend, we meet with the following remarks:

"We left our province on the 12th day of the 3d month, in the year 1746, and had several meetings in the upper part of Chester county, and near Lancaster; in some of which, the love of Christ prevailed, uniting us together in his service. Then we crossed the river Susquehannah, and had several meetings in a new settlement, called the Red-lands; the oldest of which, as I was informed, did not exceed ten years. It is the poorer sort of people that commonly begin to improve remote deserts. With a small stock, they have houses to build, lands to clear and fence, corn to raise, clothes to provide, and children to educate; that Friends, who visit such, may well sympathise with them in their hardships in the wilderness;

and though the best entertainment such can give may seem coarse to some, who are used to cities or old-settled places, it becomes the disciples of Christ to be content with it. Our hearts were sometimes enlarged in the love of our heavenly Father amongst those people; and the sweet influence of his Spirit supported us through some difficulties: To him be the praise!—

Two things were remarkable to me in this journey; first, in regard to my entertainment, when I ate, drank, and lodged at free-cost, with people who lived in ease on the hard labour of their slaves, I felt uneasy; and, as my mind was inward to the Lord, I found, from place to place, this uneasiness return upon me, at times, through the whole visit. Where the masters bore a good share of the burthen, and lived frugally, so that their servants were well provided for, and their labour moderate, I felt more easy; but where they lived in a costly way, and laid heavy burthens on their slaves, my exercise was often great, and I frequently had conversation with them, in private, concerning it. Secondly; this trade of importing slaves from their native country being much encouraged amongst them, and the white people and their children so generally living without much labour, was frequently the subject of my serious thoughts: and I saw in these southern provinces so many vices and corruptions, increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a gloom over the land; and though now many willingly run into it, yet, in future, the consequence will be grievous to posterity: I express it as it hath appeared to me, not at once nor twice, but as a matter fixed on my mind."

Again, in 1753, he relates thus:

"About this time, a person at some distance lying sick, his brother came to me to write his will: I knew he had slaves; and, asking his brother, was told he intended to leave them as slaves to his children. As writing is a profitable employ, and as offending sober people was disagreeable to my inclination, I was straitened in my mind; but, as I looked to the Lord, he inclined my heart to his testimony; and I told the man that I believed the practice of continuing slavery to this people was not right, and had a scruple in my mind against doing writings of that kind; that, though many in our society kept them as slaves, still I was not easy to be concerned in it; and desired to be excused from going to write the will. I spake to him in the fear of the Lord; and he made no reply to what I said, but went away; he, also, had some concern in the practice; and I thought he was displeased with me. In this case I had a fresh confirmation, that acting contrary to present outward interest, from a motive of

divine love, and in regard to truth and righteousness, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men."

On some subsequent occasions, his judgment had sufficient weight to procure freedom for those negroes, who were the subjects of it.

"Scruples to do writings relative to keeping slaves, having been the means of sundry small trials to me, in which I have so evidently felt my own will set aside, I think it good to mention a few of them. Tradesmen and retailers of goods, who depend on their business for a living, are naturally inclined to keep the good will of their customers; nor is it a pleasant thing for young men to be under any necessity to question the judgment or honesty of elderly men, and more especially of such as have a fair reputation. Deep-rooted customs, though wrong, are not easily altered, but it is the duty of every one to be firm in that which they certainly know to be right for them. A charitable, benevolent man, well acquainted with a negro, may, I believe, under some circumstances, keep him in his family as a servant, from no other motive than the negro's good; but man, as man, knows not what shall be after him, nor hath he any assurance that his children will attain to that perfection in wisdom and goodness, necessary rightly to exercise such power: hence it is clear to me, that I ought not to be the scribe where wills are drawn, in which some children are made absolute masters over others during life.

"About this time, 1755, an ancient man, of good esteem in the neighbourhood, came to my house to get his will written. He had young negroes; and I asked him privately, how he proposed to dispose of them: he told me: I then said, I cannot write thy will without breaking my own peace; and respectfully gave him my reasons for it. He signified that he had a choice that I should have written it; but as I could not, consistently with my conscience, he did not desire it; and so he got it written by some other person. And, a few years after, there being great alterations in his family, he came again to get me to write his will: his negroes were yet young, and his son, to whom he intended to give them, was, since he first spoke to me, from a libertine become a sober young man; and he supposed that I would have been free, on that account, to write it. We had much friendly talk on the subject, and then deferred it: a few days after, he came again, and directed their freedom; and so I wrote his will.

Near the time the last-mentioned friend first spoke to me, a neighbour received a bad bruise in his body, and sent for me to bleed him, which being done, he desired me to write

his will. I took notes; and amongst other things, he told me to which of his children he gave his young negro. I considered the pain and distress he was in, and knew not how it would end; so I wrote his will, save only that part concerning his slave, and carrying it to his bed-side, read it to him, and then told him, in a friendly way, that I could not write any instruments by which my fellow-creatures were made slaves, without bringing trouble on my mind: I let him know that I charged nothing for what I had done; and desired to be excused from doing the other part in the way he proposed. We then had a serious conference on the subject; at length he agreeing to set her free, I finished his will."

Nor were his endeavours in this cause, limited to private or public conference. He wrote some "Considerations on keeping negroes," which being approved by his friends, were printed at the expense of the Society, and distributed among its members. This pamphlet he followed up by a second part on the same subject: and in many subsequent journeys, and opportunities which their meetings for discipline principally afforded him, he continued to bear his testimony against this oppression, and to exert an increasing influence on the minds of his fellow-professors.

The following reflections, written in 1757, while he was travelling on a religious account, among slave-holders, are forcibly descriptive of the views and feelings under which he was accustomed to reason on such occasions:

"From the time of my entering Maryland, I have been much under sorrow, which of late so increased upon me, that my mind was almost overwhelmed; and I may say with the Psalmist, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God," who, in infinite goodness, looked upon my affliction, and in my private retirement, sent the Comforter for my relief; for which I humbly bless his holy name. The sense I had of the state of the churches brought a weight of distress upon me. The gold to me appeared dim, and the fine gold changed: * and though this is the case too generally, yet the sense of it in these parts hath in a particular manner borne heavy upon me. It appeared to me, that through the prevailing of the spirit of this world, the minds of many were brought to an inward desolation; and instead of the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and heavenly wisdom, which are the necessary companions of the true sheep of Christ, a spirit of fierceness and the love of dominion too generally prevailed. From small beginnings in errors, great buildings by degrees are raised; and from one age to another are more and more strengthen-

ed by the general concurrence of the people: and as men obtain reputation by their profession of the truth, their virtues are mentioned as arguments in favour of general error; and those of less note, to justify themselves, say*that such and such good men did the like. By what other steps could the people of Judah arise to that height of wickedness, as to give just ground for the prophet Isaiah to declare in the name of the Lord, "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth," or for the Almighty to call upon the great city of Jerusalem, just before the Babylonish captivity, "If ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth,—I will pardon it." The prospect of a road lying open to the same degeneracy, in some parts of this newly settled land of America, in respect to our conduct towards the negroes, hath deeply bowed my mind in this journey: and though, to relate briefly how these people are treated, is no agreeable work, yet, after often reading over the notes I made as I travelled, I find my mind engaged to preserve them.

Many of the white people in those provinces take little or no care of negro marriages; and when negroes marry after their own way, some make so little account of those marriages, that, with views of outward interest, they often part men from their wives, by selling them far asunder; which is common when estates are sold by executors at vendue. Many, whose labour is heavy, being followed at their business in the field by a man with a whip, hired for that purpose, have in common little else allowed but one peck of Indian corn, and some salt, for one week, with a few potatoes. (The potatoes they commonly raise by their labour on the first day of the week.) The correction ensuing on their disobedience to overseers, or slothfulness in business, is often very severe, and sometimes desperate. Men and women have many times scarce clothes enough to hide their nakedness; and boys and girls, ten and twelve years old, are often quite naked amongst their master's children. Some use endeavours to instruct those (negro children) they have in reading; but in common this is not only neglected, but disapproved.

These are the people by whose labour the other inhabitants are in a great measure supported, and many of them in the luxuries of life,—these are the people who have made no agreement to serve us, and who have not forfeited their liberty that we know of—these are the souls for whom Christ died!—and for our conduct towards them *we* must answer, before Him who is no respecter of persons. They who know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, and are thus acquainted with the merciful, benevolent, Gospel spirit, will therein perceive that the indignation of God is

kindled against oppression and cruelty; and in beholding the great distress of so numerous a people, will find cause for mourning!"

The Society of Friends, it is well known, cleared their own hands of the practice of slavery, and ultimately came forward in a body to act as its determined and strenuous opposers. Let us now return to the views of John Woolman on some other subjects.

"Until this year, 1756, I continued to retail goods, besides following my trade as a tailor; about which time, I grew uneasy on account of my business growing too cumbersome: I had begun with selling trimmings for garments, and from thence proceeded to sell cloths and linens; and, at length, having got a considerable shop of goods, my trade increased every year, and the road to large business appeared open; but I felt a stop in my mind.

Through the mercies of the Almighty, I had, in a good degree, learned to be content with a plain way of living: I had but a small family; and, on serious consideration, I believed truth did not require me to engage much in cumbering affairs. It had been my general practice to buy and sell things really useful: things that served chiefly to please the vain mind in people, I was not easy to trade in; seldom did it; and, whenever I did, I found it weaken me as a Christian.

The increase of business became my burthen; for, though my natural inclination was toward merchandise, yet I believed truth required me to live more free from outward cumber: and there was now a strife in my mind between the two; and in this exercise my prayers were put up to the Lord, who graciously heard me, and gave me a heart resigned to his holy will. Then I lessened my outward business; and, as I had opportunity, told my customers of my intention, that they might consider what shop to turn to, and, in a while, wholly laid down merchandise, following my trade, as a tailor, myself only, having no apprentice. I also had a nursery of apple trees; in which I employed some of my time in hoeing, grafting, trimming, and inoculating. In merchandise it is the custom, where I lived, to sell chiefly on credit, and poor people often get in debt; and when payment is expected, not having wherewith to pay, their creditors often sue for it at law. Having often observed occurrences of this kind, I found it good for me to advise poor people to take such goods as were most useful and not costly.

In the time of trading, I had an opportunity of seeing, that the too liberal use of spirituous liquors, and the custom of wearing too costly apparel, led some people into great inconveniences; and these two things appeared to be often con-

nected; for, by not attending to that use of things which is consistent with universal righteousness, there is an increase of labour which extends beyond what our heavenly Father intends for us: and by great labour, and often by much sweating, there is, even among such as are not drunkards, a craving of some liquors to revive the spirits; that, partly by the luxurious drinking of some, and partly by the drinking of others, led to it through immoderate labour, very great quantities of rum are every year expended in our colonies; the greater part of which we should have no need of, did we steadily attend to pure wisdom.

Where men take pleasure in feeling their minds elevated by strong drink, and so indulge their appetite as to disorder their understandings, neglect their duty as members in a family or civil society, and cast off all regard to religion, their case is much to be pitied; and where such, whose lives are for the most part regular, and whose examples have a strong influence on the minds of others, adhere to some customs which powerfully draw to the use of more strong liquor than pure wisdom allows; this also, as it hinders the spreading of the spirit of meekness, and strengthens the hands of the more excessive drinkers, is a case to be lamented.

As every degree of luxury hath some connection with evil, those who profess to be disciples of Christ, and are looked upon as leaders of the people, should have that mind in them which was also in Christ, and so stand separate from every wrong way, as a means of help to the weaker. As I have sometimes been much spent in the heat, and taken spirits to revive me, I have found by experience, that in such circumstances the mind is not so calm, nor so fitly disposed for divine meditation, as when all such extremes are avoided; and I have felt an increasing care to attend to that holy Spirit which sets bounds to our desires, and leads those, who faithfully follow it, to apply all the gifts of Divine providence to the purposes for which they were intended. Did such as have the care of great estates, attend with singleness of heart to this heavenly instructor, which so opens and enlarges the mind, that men love their neighbours as themselves, they would have wisdom given them to manage, without finding occasion to employ some people in the luxuries of life, or to make it necessary for others to labour too hard; but, for want of steadily regarding this principle of divine love, a selfish spirit takes place in the minds of people, which is attended with darkness and manifold confusion in the world."

"In the fall of this year, (1764) having hired a man, to work, I perceived in conversation that he had been a soldier in the late war on this continent; and in the evening, giving a nar-

ration of his captivity among the Indians, he informed me that he saw two of his fellow captives tortured to death in a very cruel manner.

This relation affected me with sadness, under which I went to bed; and the next morning, soon after I awoke, a fresh and living sense of Divine love was spread over my mind; in which I had a renewed prospect of the nature of that wisdom from above, which leads to a right use of all gifts, both spiritual and temporal, and gives content therein: under a feeling thereof, I wrote as follows:

Hath He, who gave me a being attended with many wants unknown to the brute creatures, given me a capacity superior to theirs; and shown me, that a moderate application to business is proper to my present condition; and that this, attended with his blessing, may supply all outward wants, while they remain within the bounds he hath fixed; and no imaginary wants, proceeding from an evil spirit, have any place in me? Attend, then, O my soul! to this pure wisdom, as thy sure conductor through the manifold dangers of the world.

Doth pride lead to vanity? Doth vanity form imaginary wants? Do these wants prompt men to exert their power in requiring that of others, which they themselves would rather be excused from, were the same required of them? Do these proceedings beget hard thoughts? Do hard thoughts when ripe, become malice? Does malice, when ripe, become revengeful; and in the end, do men inflict terrible pains on their fellow-creatures, and spread desolation in the world?

Do mankind, walking in uprightness, delight in each other's happiness? And do these creatures, capable of this attainment, by giving way to an evil spirit, employ their wit and strength to afflict and destroy one another? Remember, then, O my soul! the quietude of those in whom Christ governs, and in all thy proceedings feel after it.

Doth he condescend to bless thee with his presence; to move and influence to action; to dwell in thee, and walk in thee? Remember then thy station, as a being sacred to God; accept of the strength freely offered thee; and take heed that no weakness, in conforming to expensive, unwise, and hard-hearted customs, gendering to discord and strife, be given way to. Doth he claim my body as his Temple, and graciously grant that I may be sacred to him? O! that I may prize this favour; and that my whole life may be conformable to this character?"

In the year 1763, John Woolman made a journey with considerable inconvenience and danger, to visit, in the love of the gospel, the Indian natives at Wehaloosing, a settlement on the Susquehannah, two hundred miles from Philadelphia,

where at that time they were religiously disposed. In one of the religious opportunities with them, feeling his mind covered with the spirit of prayer, he told the interpreters that he found it in his heart to pray to God, and was willing for them to omit interpreting.—Before they dispersed, he observed one of the Indians speaking to an interpreter, and was afterwards told, that he said in substance, “I love to feel where words come from.” After a subsequent meeting, which was held in the evening, Papunehang, the Indian above alluded to, having gone to bed, our friend heard him speak for a moment or two with a harmonious voice, and asking the interpreter, was told that “he was expressing his thankfulness to God, for the favours he had received that day, and prayed that he would continue to favour him with the same which he had experienced in that meeting.” An evidence that the visitations of heavenly love are not dependent upon circumstance, or place, nor confined to nation or colour, but are in the wisdom and goodness of God extended to all, in order that we may be brought into fellowship with him, and with his son Jesus Christ. He was preserved to return in safety to his family: and has left in his journal an interesting account of his proceedings. After other travels on the continent of America, and a continuance of patient labour in the cause of universal truth and justice, he came in 1772, with the approbation of his friends, to pay a religious visit to the Society in the northern part of England. Here the great Master, whom he had endeavoured faithfully to serve, was pleased to call him,* as it appears, with his loins girded about, and his light burning, to his everlasting reward.

The circumstances of his end may be suitably introduced by some reflections, which he wrote shortly before it, on his state and proceedings as a minister of the gospel.

“On this visit to England I have felt some instructions sealed on my mind, which I am concerned to leave in writing, for the use of such as are called to the station of a minister of Christ. Christ being the Prince of Peace, and we being no more than ministers, I find it necessary for us, not only to feel a concern in our first going forth, but to experience the renewings thereof, in the appointment of meetings.

I felt a concern, in America, to prepare for this voyage; and being, through the mercy of God, brought safe here, my heart was like a vessel that wanted vent; and, for several weeks, at first, when my mouth was opened in meetings, it often felt like the raising of a gate in a water-course, where a weight of water lay upon it; and in these labours there ap-

*Luke xii. 35.

peared a fresh visitation to many, especially the youth; but sometimes, after this, I felt empty and poor, and yet felt a necessity to appoint meetings. In this state I was exercised to abide in the pure life of truth; and, in all my labours, to watch diligently against the motions of self in my own mind.

I have frequently felt a necessity to stand up, when the spring of the ministry was low; and to speak from the necessity, in that which subjecteth the will of the creature; and herein I was united with the suffering seed, and found inward sweetness with these mortifying labours.

As I have been preserved in a watchful attention to the divine leader, under these dispensations, enlargement at times hath followed, and the power of truth hath risen higher, in some meetings, than I ever knew it before through me.

Thus I have been more and more instructed as to the necessity of depending, not upon a concern which I felt in America, to come on a visit to England, but upon the fresh instructions of Christ, the Prince of Peace, from day to day.

The gift is pure; and, while the eye is single in attending hereto, the understanding is preserved clear: self is kept out. We rejoice in filling up that which remains of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church.

The natural man loveth eloquence, and many love to hear eloquent orations; and if there is not a careful attention to the gift, men, who have once laboured in the pure gospel ministry, growing weary of suffering, and ashamed of appearing weak, may kindle a fire, compass themselves about with sparks, and walk in the light,* not of Christ, who is under suffering; but of that fire, which they going from the gift, have kindled; and that in hearers, which is gone from the meek, suffering state, into the worldly wisdom, may be warmed with this fire, and speak highly of these labours. That which is of God gathers to God; and that which is of the world is owned by the world.

In this journey a labour hath attended my mind, that the ministers amongst us may be preserved in the meek feeling life of truth, where we have no desire but to follow Christ, and be with him; that, when he is under suffering, we may suffer with him, and never desire to rise up in dominion, but as he, by the virtue of his own Spirit, may raise us."

A few days after writing these considerations, John Woolman in the course of his religious visits, came to the city of York, and was taken ill of the small-pox. The Friends, who

* Isa. l. 11

attended him, preserved minutes of the following expressions in the time of his sickness:

On First-day, the 27th of the ninth month, 1772, his disorder appeared to be the small-pox.

Second-day, he said he felt the disorder to affect his head, so that he could think little, and but as a child.

Third-day, he uttered the following prayer: "O Lord, my God! the amazing horrors of darkness were gathered around me, and covered me all over, and I saw no way to go forth; I felt the depth and extent of the misery of my fellow-creatures separated from the divine harmony, and it was heavier than I could bear, and I was crushed down under it; I lifted up my hand, I stretched out my arm, but there was none to help me; I looked round about and was amazed; in the depths of misery, O Lord! I remembered that thou art omnipotent, that I had called thee Father, and I felt that I loved thee, and I was made quiet in thy will, and I waited for deliverance from thee; thou hadst pity upon me when no man could help me: I saw that meekness under suffering was showed to us in the most affecting example of thy Son, and thou taughtest me to follow him, and I said,—Thy will, O Father! be done."

Fourth-day morning, being asked how he felt himself, he meekly answered, I do not know that I have slept this night, I feel the disorder making its progress, but my mind is mercifully preserved in stillness and peace. Some time after he said he was sensible the pains of death must be hard to bear; but, if he escaped them now, he must some time pass through them, and he did not know that he could be better prepared, but had no will in it. He said he had settled his outward affairs to his mind, had taken leave of his wife and family as never to return, leaving them to the Divine protection: adding, and though I feel them near to me at this time, yet I freely give them up, having a hope that they will be provided for. And a little after said, This trial is made easier than I could have thought, my will being wholly taken away; for if I were anxious for the event, it would have been harder; but I am not, and my mind enjoys a perfect calm.

In the night, a young woman having given him something to drink, he said, My child, thou seemest very kind to me, a poor creature, the Lord will reward thee for it. A while after he cried out with great earnestness of spirit, O my Father! my Father! and soon after he said, O my Father! my Father! how comfortable art thou to my soul in this trying season! Being asked if he would take a little nourishment, after some pause he replied, My child, I cannot tell what to say to it; I seem nearly arrived where my soul shall have rest from all its troubles.

After giving in something to be inserted in his journal, he said I believe the Lord will now excuse me from exercises of this kind; and I see no work but one, which is to be the last wrought by me in this world; the messenger will come that will release me from all these troubles; but it must be in the Lord's time, which I am waiting for. He said he had laboured to do whatever was required, according to the ability received, in the remembrance of which he had peace; and though the disorder was strong at times, and would, like a whirlwind, come over his mind, yet it had hitherto been kept steady, and centered in everlasting love; adding, and if that be mercifully continued, I ask or desire no more.

Fifth-day night, having repeatedly consented to take medicine with a view to settle his stomach, but without effect; the friend then waiting on him, said, through distress, What shall I do now! He answered with great composure, Rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks: but, added a little after, This is sometimes hard to come at.

Sixth-day morning, he broke forth early in supplication on this wise: O Lord! it was thy power that enabled me to forsake sin in my youth, and I have felt thy bruises for disobedience; but, as I bowed under them, thou didst heal me, continuing a father and a friend: I feel thy power now, and I beg that, in the approaching trying moment, thou wilt keep my heart steadfast unto thee.

Upon his giving directions to a friend concerning some little things, she said, I will take care, but hope thou wilt live to order them thyself. He replied, My hope is in Christ; and though I may seem a little better, a change in the disorder may soon happen, and my little strength be dissolved: and, if it so happen, I shall be gathered to my everlasting rest. On her saying she did not doubt that, but could not help mourning to see so many faithful servants removed at so low a time, he said, All good cometh from the Lord, whose power is the same, and who can work as he sees best. The same day he had given directions about wrapping his corpse, perceiving a friend to weep, he said, I would rather thou wouldest guard against weeping for me, my sister; I sorrow not, though I have had some painful conflicts: but now they seem over, and matters well settled, and I look at the face of my dear Redeemer; for sweet is his voice, and his countenance is comely.

First-day, fourth of tenth month, being very weak, and in general difficult to be understood, he uttered a few words in commemoration of the Lord's goodness, and added, How tenderly have I been waited on in this time of affliction! in which I may say, in Job's words, tedious days and wearisome nights are appointed unto me: And how many are spending their

time and money in vanity and superfluities; while thousands and tens of thousands want the necessaries of life, who might be relieved by them, and their distresses, at such a time as this, in some degree softened, by administering suitable things.

Second-day morning, the apothecary, who appeared very anxious to assist him, being present, he queried about the probability of such a load of matter being thrown off his weak body; and the apothecary making some remarks, implying he thought it might, he spoke with an audible voice on this wise:—My dependence is on the Lord Jesus, who, I trust, will forgive my sins, which is all I hope for; and if it be his will to raise up this body again, I am content: and if to die, I am resigned; and, if thou canst not be easy without trying to assist nature, I submit. After which, his throat was so much affected, that it was very difficult for him to speak so as to be understood: and he frequently wrote when he wanted any thing. About the second hour, on fourth-day morning, he asked for pen and ink, and at several times, with much difficulty, wrote thus: “I believe my being here is in the wisdom of Christ; I know not as to life or death.”

“About a quarter before six, the same morning, he seemed to fall into an easy sleep, which continued about half an hour; when, seeming to awake, he breathed a few times with more difficulty, and expired, without sigh, groan, or struggle.

ON

FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS.

BY FENELON,
ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY.

THE opportunities for displaying great deeds of goodness are rare, and when they do present themselves, there are many powerful stimulus to kindle magnanimity and perseverance. But the little occasions to stand firm in the cause of truth come upon us inadvertently; and almost every moment they render it necessary for us, without ceasing, to maintain a warfare against pride, slothfulness, and a domineering lordly disposition; against precipitancy, impatience, &c. opposing our corrupt wills every where, and in all things. If we will be faithful herein, our fallen nature must die to all its propensities.

Supporting a life of godliness, is like unto successful management and economy in outward and domestic affairs. If attention is not paid to minute matters, frugally to save, and avoid unnecessary expenses, there is a greater probability step by step of a declension in point of property than by large undertakings which naturally excite caution. He who learns, by Divine assistance, to make a right application in small matters of a spiritual nature, will not fail to accumulate much treasure as well as he who is attentive in temporal concerns. Great things are only great because many small materials are brought and combined together—he who is careful to lose nothing, will generally increase his wealth. It is well for us to consider that it is not so much what we do, as the motives of love in which our actions originate, and surrendering our own wills; this it is alone which renders our good works acceptable in the Divine sight. People judge of our actions according to outward observation, but with God those things are nothing, which in the eyes of men shine with great lustre, for he requires a sincere intention, a will ready to bend to his will on all occasions, and an upright entire forsaking ourselves.

Our faith is tried more powerfully in common occurrences, and less exposed to a mixture of pride, than in uncommon and remarkable concerns. We also find that we are many times more attached to certain little things than to matters of moment—for instance, some would find it much easier to give generous alms, than to deny themselves a favourite diversion. Man is very liable to become beguiled by little things, because he looks on them as matters of indifference, and imagines himself free from any powerful attachment to them; but when God commands him to forsake them, he finds by painful experience how inordinate and unwarrantable his attachment to and practice of them was; besides, through our inattention to small duties, we frequently give offence and stumble our families, and those about us; for people cannot believe that we fear God with uprightness, when our conduct in small concerns is immoderate and careless; for how can an observer reconcile the idea of our being strong and scrupulous observers of important duties that require the greatest sacrifices, when matters of small account have an undue ascendancy over us; but the greatest danger herein is, that the soul through careless indifference in lesser things, becomes gradually accustomed to unfaithfulness, grieves the Holy Spirit, and by degrees learns to account it a matter of small consequence to go counter to the will of God: on the contrary, true love esteems nothing indifferent; every thing capable of pleasing or displeasing God appearing great: not that true love drives the soul into a slavish, fearful scrupulousness, but it allows of no particular set bounds to faithfulness; it moves the mind in simplicity to pass by those things that God doth not require, but does not hesitate about those things he does require, be they great or small; so that our obedience in small matters does not originate from a forcible terror on the mind; it all arises in and by a current and power of love, free from those slavish fears and consultations, accompanying restless, anxious, and distressed souls. Man is drawn into the way of his duty through love to God; for even in the time of greatest trial, when the spirit of truth unceasingly urges the submissive soul step by step in the observance of small duties, and seems about to divest it of all freedom, behold it finds itself on a wide plain, and enjoys the depth of peace and freedom in him.—Oh! how happy is that soul.

Finally, it is particularly necessary for those who are naturally of an inadvertent and unwatchful disposition to be mindful. Man by paying little regard to small duties, becomes accustomed to make no account of them; he does not enough consider the lead and tendency thereof;—he does not enough view the almost imperceptible ascendancy and assimilation

of these things in and with his fallen propensities—he forgets the compunction and remorse these things have heretofore occasioned:—he had rather indulge an imaginary idea of his establishment, and depend on his own judgment, (which has however oftentimes deceived him) than to settle down into a constant, diligent, attentive watchfulness. We are apt to say, it is a little thing, it is nothing, yea, it is nothing!—but it is such a nothing on which thy all depends—such a nothing as thou so inordinately lovest, as to cleave to it in preference to the will of God—such a nothing, which thou wilt despise in words, in order to frame an excuse for thy non-observance of it; but in the ground it is such a nothing which thou holdest fast, against the will of God, and which, if continued in, will bring thee to ruin.

Despising small things does not, as some assert, arise from greatness of mind, but far otherwise, from a short sightedness, esteeming things small which in their tendency and consequences have a very extensive reach and effect. The more we discover ourselves inclined to indifference in small things, and the more we find it a trial to us to pay attention herein, the more we ought to fear and become jealous, yea, and to cast up bulwarks against a spirit of indifference and carnal security—he that despises little things, will certainly fall by little and little. Be not afraid of a constant watchfulness of mind in small things: a godly resolution is necessary in the beginning, and the exercise and suffering thou endurest, thou hast well deserved, it being very necessary for the perfecting thy peace and security, out of which there is nothing but disquiet and backsliding. God will render this path more and more sweet and pleasant. True love is watchful and attentive without great and painful restraint of spirit.

Augustine saith,

“Quod minimum est, minimum est, sed in minimo fidem esse magnum est.”

“Little things are little things, but to be faithful in little things is something great.”